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but one of the footnotes is signed "Sw.," and the diagnosis is not signed (as it is in some other cases, but not in all).

In the case of "*Oidemia americana* Sw. and Rich.," the proper authority is obviously Swainson, and that it was not so printed in the revised Check-List is clearly due to oversight.

In regard to the priority of names published in the same volume, Mr. Stone will find this point treated under Canon XVII of the A. O. U. Code, to the effect that of names of equal pertinency, "that is to be preferred which stands first in the book."

As to the case of *Lepus arcticus*, I should agree with Mr. Rhoads and write *Lepus arcticus* Ross, or, in making a full or formal citation, *Lepus arcticus* "Leach" Ross. *Lepus glacialis* is clearly untenable, *arcticus* having precedence of 19 pages in the same volume. Even if Leach imparted the name *arcticus* to Ross, he had no right to change it later on the ground that he preferred *glacialis*, since "an author has no right to change or reject names of his own proposing, except in accordance with rules of nomenclature governing all naturalists" (cf. A. O. U. Code, Canon XXXV). The case of *Lepus arcticus* Ross, therefore, rests entirely on the adequacy of Ross's accompanying description, which, if sufficient (I have not the description at hand), clearly renders the name *glacialis* untenable.<sup>1</sup>—J. A. ALLEN.]

### A Question of Nomenclature.

TO THE EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs*.—The publication by Mr. Anthony, in the January number of 'The Auk,' of a new subspecies of *Dryobates*, under the appellation *Dryobates villosus montanus*, involves a principle of nomenclature in regard to which it may be profitable to invite the opinions of systematists, and upon which a decision by the A. O. U. Committee seems desirable.

*Picus montanus* of Brehm (Vögel Deutschlands, 1831, p. 189) is now relegated to the synonymy of *Dendrocopos* (= *Dryobates*) *major* (Linn.); and the question arises whether or not the specific term *montanus* is available for further employment in the genus *Dryobates*. Canon XXXIII of the A. O. U. Code, which is presumed to provide for such contingencies reads: ". . . a specific or subspecific name is to be changed when it has been applied to some other species of the same genus, or used previ-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Baird (Mam. N. Am., 1857, p. —) says he does not see why the name *arcticus* Ross is not tenable, having priority, but not being able to consult the work in question he follows Sabine in the use of *glacialis* Leach. I find that in 1877, with the work before me, I gave precedence to *arcticus* Ross.

ously in combination with the same generic name." If the first clause above quoted be not subject to ambiguous interpretation, it seems evident that a new name will be required for the form now known as *Dryobates villosus montanus* Anthony.

Since, however, it is maintained by some that absolute identity of both generic and specific terms is considered necessary for the rejection of a scientific name as a synonym, in other words, that a distinction is to be made between the genus of nomenclature and the genus of zoölogy, it is hoped that there may be elicited from members of the A. O. U. Committee statements of their views respecting the rule to be applied in cases like the present.

Very truly yours,

HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

Washington, D. C.

[Mr. Oberholser having kindly invited me to give my opinion on the above case, I take the liberty of submitting the following, as merely my individual ruling on the question.

According to my interpretation of Canon XXXIII of the A. O. U. 'Code,' there is no conflict between Anthony's name *Dryobates villosus montanus* and Brehm's *Picus montanus*, for the simple reason that they are not homonyms. A species name necessarily consists of two elements, a generic and a specific, both being essential components of the name. This is explicitly stated in Canon X of the A. O. U. Code, which affirms that the two names, the specific and the generic, "together" constitute the "technical name of any specifically distinct organism." That this view was in the mind of the Committee in framing Canon XXXIII is evident from the argument and illustrations given under it in favor of extending the maxim "Once a synonym [or homonym] always a synonym [or homonym]" to specific and subspecific names.

To pursue further the case cited by Mr. Oberholser, *Picus montanus* Brehm is a pure synonym of *Picus major* Linn., and the name *montanus* had never been coupled with *Dryobates* prior to Mr. Anthony's combination of the two terms,—that is, so far as we know, and for the sake of the illustration, let it be granted that they have not. These names are then not homonyms, and can never come in conflict. But let us suppose that *Picus montanus* Brehm really represents a good species, authors hitherto to the contrary notwithstanding, and that it is referable to the genus *Dryobates*. In that case whoever restores the species must adopt for it the name *Dryobates montanus* (Brehm), and Anthony's name, having been given later, must be replaced by a new name; but the change is not to be made until the necessity therefor arises. In nine cases out of ten, like this of Anthony and Brehm, it is safe to say the necessity for a change would never arise. Hence it would be highly unwise to adopt a rule, in view of the constantly changing limits and values of genera, that would

require the specific element of a species name to be changed whenever, under the vicissitudes of name shifting, it was brought under the same generic name as an earlier similar specific element of a species name which had never been combined with the same generic element. To be obliged to be constantly on the alert for homonyms is bad enough, but this is a triviality in comparison to the task of hunting out all previous combinations that might possibly associate the specific element of a name with other and entirely different generic combinations, to say nothing of the enormous element of uncertainty it would introduce into the matter of stability of names through the purely personal element that is constantly operative in changing the limits of genera. Finally, I know of no code of nomenclature that provides for or requires a change of a species name under conditions like those cited by Mr. Oberholser.—  
J. A. ALLEN.]

### 'Ord's Zoölogy' Again.

TO THE EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs,—In the Introduction to my Reprint of 'Ord's Zoölogy' (1894, p. viii) it is stated that the only copy of this part of the second American (1815) edition of Guthrie's 'Geography' previously known to authors had mysteriously disappeared from the library of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. While searching for some references in a bound volume (No. I a) of General Natural History Tracts at the Academy, I lately chanced upon this missing copy of a rare and historic bit of literature. The separate is the last (No. xvii) of this volume of Tracts. On the upper margin of the first page of the brochure (p. 291) is written in lead pencil the autograph signature, "George Ord," and in lead pencil, apparently in another person's<sup>1</sup> writing, "from Guthrie's Geography, Phil. Edition." In ink, in Cassin's hand, follow the words, "Guthrie Geog. Philada. 1815." The separate probably had originally attached to it, page 290, containing the introductory paragraph, and the last leaf containing page 261, on which Ord's contribution ends, but neither of these leaves are preserved. Owing to some oversight the "author's" reference to this tract in our card catalogue contained no data to indicate anything further than its former existence in the library, and misled by this, it was supposed, after a fruitless search, that it had been irretrievably lost. On finding the tract, however, it was discovered that the full reference and data had been entered in the 'subject' catalogue under "Natural History of the United States" and so it escaped notice.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. J. Nolan declares this to be the handwriting of John Cassin, and a careful comparison with Cassin's letters strongly supports this view.